

Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) took to the House Rules Committee Thursday to assail efforts to add \$230 billion to the deficit while taking away preventive care from vulnerable seniors.

Welch called on House leadership to honor its campaign promises and allow for up-or-down votes on amendments that would preserve key components of the Affordable Care Act. Yesterday [Welch submitted four amendments](#) to the health care reform repeal legislation alongside 63 of his colleagues.

"Today, Congress' impartial referee found that your health care proposal – repeal and erase – will add \$230 billion to the deficit. From where I sit, the promises you made during the campaign – the rhetoric you relied upon – impel you to come up with an offset for that \$230 billion," Welch told the committee.

"Is the first bill passed by the Republican Congress on health care going to take away some specific, hard-fought achievements for the middle class of America? This is not about political rhetoric, it's about policy that affects real people, real families and real businesses."

Focusing his remarks on stories he heard from Vermonters about the impact of ending free preventive care, Welch cited a conversation he had Thursday morning with Rutland Regional Medical Center President Tom Huebner.

"What [Tom Huebner] said, and I'm going to quote, is, 'If we are serious about bending the cost curve, we need to prevent disease and we need to manage disease and we have to have free preventive care in order to do that.'"

Welch also recounted the case of a 64 year-old Vermonter who just this week visited a doctor at Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington and was diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer. Because the patient was waiting to qualify for Medicare before seeking preventive screenings, his cancer was caught too late.

"This is real," Welch said. "The decision that you are making is real. This is not campaign rhetoric. You know, you won the campaign and you were effective in your arguments – but you are making a real decision. You are part of the United States Congress, and the policies we make are not about campaign rhetoric. It's not about the next election. It's about what's going to happen to the Rutland Regional Medical Center. It's about what's going to happen to this Vermonter who now has metastatic colon cancer that could have been detected. There are simple things in this bill that are important to the people you represent and the people I represent, and it is absolutely unnecessary to take those securities away from the middle class of this country."

See below for video of Welch's testimony: